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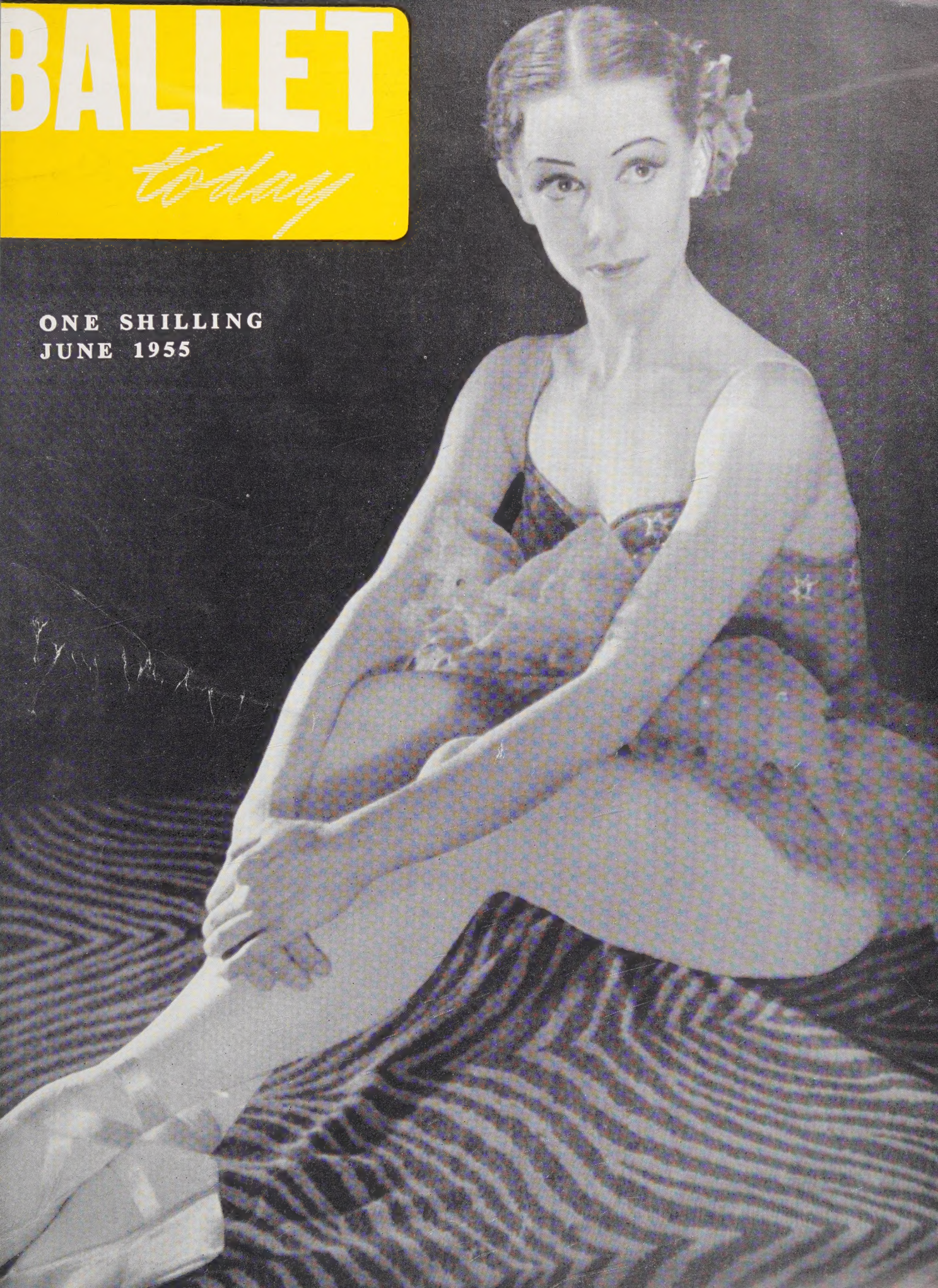
JUNE 1955



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Editor—Estelle Herf

June 1955

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Svetlana Beriosova as Odile in Le Lac des Cynes—*photo Mike Davis.*

OUR cover portrait this month is of Nadia Nerina in *Don Quixote*. Now on a recital tour throughout the Union of South Africa, with Alexis Rassine as partner, both will rejoin the Sadler's Wells Ballet prior to the Company's next American tour.

This is an exclusive BALLET TODAY photograph by Mike Davis.

OTHER travellers abroad during May were, Violetta Elvin and John Field. Their plane flying from London to Buenos Aires force-landed with engine trouble at Dakar, West Africa. The VIOLETTA ELVIN column has had to be omitted from our pages this month as our press date coincided with her return to this country.

SADLER'S Wells Ballet season ends on June 25th, and the Company will then go on holiday for a month, returning to rehearse at the end of July. They will give a short season at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden between August 22nd and September 3rd, prior to their fourth American tour.

KENNETH Macmillan's second new ballet for Sadler's Wells Theatre presented on 26th May will be fully reviewed and illustrated in our next issue.

★

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LES PATINEURS *at* SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

LES Patineurs which was first conceived at the Sadler's Wells Theatre eighteen years ago, and after some one hundred and seventy five performances at the Royal Opera House, has now in the same fashion as *The Rake's Progress* returned to the place of its birth.

It was a somewhat daring gesture to produce this work for the Theatre Ballet, for it was inviting comparison with the present and former casts of this ballet, which until very recently was still in the Covent Garden repertoire; yet this young company could not have achieved a greater and more individual success, which has come as a well earned tonic in a season in which they have had many misfortunes.

The series of *divertissements* created by Frederick Ashton were dazzlingly portrayed. Since Harold Turner created the role there can have been few blue boys with such technical brilliance and assurety as Donald Britton, whose performance in itself was outstanding. Sara Neil as one of the blue girls performed her *fouettes* with impeccable style, in company with Doreen Tempest they fully deserved the ovation they received. Annette Page at short notice had to assume the role of the white girl, which was to have been Patricia Miller's last creation in the company; she was understandably nervous, her portrayal suffering from one or two technical faults; these have however been rectified at subsequent performances. David Poole provided her with worthy support. Special mention must be made of the boys in the *ensemble*, their elevation was remarkable and they danced with verve and obvious enthusiasm.

The wintry setting and costumes designed by William Chappell, remain in their timeless fashion, and with almost negligible alterations, as attractive as ever.

V.C.

IN LONDON NOW

SHANTA

BY FERNAU HALL

SHANTA occupies a unique position among India's classical dancers, and her first visit to the West is an artistic event of the highest importance. She has mastered the full range of all three of the major classical styles of South India—though each of these demands many years of hard training, stamina and memory going far beyond anything imaginable in the West. Shanta is the only exponent of Mohini Attam: but for her, this wonderful solo style would have died out completely. She is the only woman in modern times to master the full range of the Kathakali dance-drama: she herself dances only the female roles, but thanks to her complete training she has been able to make history by composing a full-length Kathakali dance-drama on the theme of Ambapali, the courtesan who fell n love with Buddha. In Bharata Natyam her repertoire far exceeds that of any other dancer, and she is almost alone in maintaining the great classical tradition of creative improvisation within strict rules.

In April she was brought to New York from India (along with her musicians) by the Ford Foundation and the Museum of Modern Art to dance on television and at the Museum of Modern Art. John Coast (who managed the Balinese dancers) has arranged for her to come to England, and she will be giving a number of performances here: May 31, French Institute, London (under the auspices of the Asian Music Circle); June 2, 3, and 4, Dartington Hall; June 5, Arts Theatre, Plymouth; June 8, French Institute, London (under the auspices of the Institute of Contemporary Arts); May 28, Maddermarket, Norwich; June 15, Imperial Institute, London (under the auspices of the Royal India, Pakistan and Ceylon Society); June 10, Fortune Theatre, Drury Lane. She will then begin a tour of the Continent.

Shanta Rao, seen above in Mohini Attam costume, is now in London. For several years Shanta rejected all invitations to leave India. Daughter of a well-known Brahmin family, at 12 years of age she was sent to the school of Kathakali (traditional dance drama) at Shoranur and was the only girl pupil of the poet Vallothol who ran the institution. At 16 she studied under Minaksi Pillai greatest living teacher of Bharata Natya, a suite of dances at that time performed by temple girls only.

Photo: Herbert Matter, New York.

BALLET RAMBERT

ON TOUR, AT SADLER'S WELLS AND AT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

YOUNG American choreographer, Robert Joffrey, has accepted an invitation from the Ballet Rambert to stage one and possibly two works for their London season at Sadler's Wells in June. Mr. Joffrey teaches at the Ballet Theatre school and in his own studio. Recently, he has presented, with great success, new works on Choreo. Workshop programmes, and at Jacob's Pillow for Ted Shawn.

ON TOUR

I was fortunate in being able to get to Hastings, where the Ballet Rambert was on tour. The programme presented; *Love Knots*, Act II of *Swan Lake*, *Lilac Garden* and *Peter and the Wolf* seemed to me to be more suitable for a London audience, which would welcome such a change from the usual 'warhorse' repertoire. Nevertheless, the subtlety and humour of these ballets proved to be far from over the heads of a provincial audience, starved of ballet. Here one would expect a demand for the old favourites—but the audience sat enthralled throughout the whole performance.

When you come to examine the Ballet Rambert, it is not, on the whole, the moments of technical display that make the lasting impression. Its power lies rather in the personalities, the complete assurance and acting ability of its principal dancers. In *Lilac Garden*, for instance, a young couple not in love but about to marry are continually interrupted by groups of dancers as they take leave of the two they really wish to marry.

In tackling what could be a very dull subject like this, the company excels.

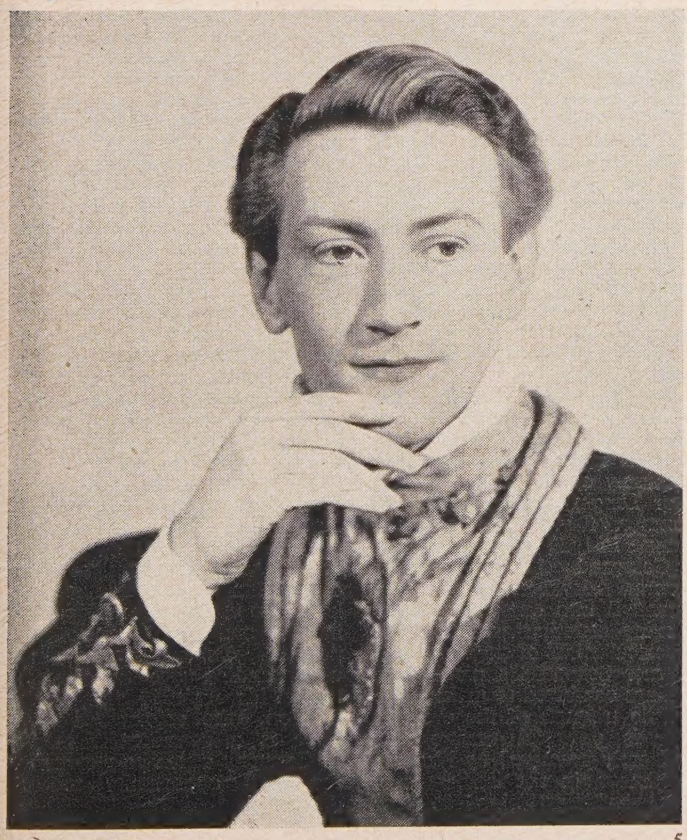
On the other hand, they obviously enjoy themselves wholeheartedly in *Peter and the Wolf*. One can easily imagine other companies, perhaps with better equipped dancers, making this whole affair a rather dowdy romp, but this group makes it immensely entertaining. It is not often that one finds humour choreographed so well in a ballet that an audience just cannot fail to laugh.

As this company depends so much on individuals—I do not feel the corps add much to the pleasure of the evening. I cannot fail to single out some of the artists; Beryl Goldwyn, full of grace and feeling, Alexander Bennett, dignified and, when required, refreshingly unobtrusive, Noreen Sopwith, with her beautiful control, Ann Horn Gillian Martlew, Patricia Dyer, John Chesworth and Alison Norwood.

This is a company not to be forgotten as soon as seen and, considering the talents now assembled, I look forward happily to their next season at Sadler's Wells.

John O'Brien

Beryl Goldwyn (*photo: R. Wilsher*)



Alexander Bennett (*photo: John Chesworth*)

SECOND INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL AT AIX-LES-BAINS

BALLET Rambert has been engaged to appear at the Second International Dance Festival at Aix-les-Bains from 18th to 23rd July. Among the dancers will be Beryl Goldwyn and Alexander Bennett, both pictured on this page. By special permission of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Violetta Elvin and John Field will appear as guest stars with the company during their visit. Also appearing in the Festival which continues until 7th August will be Lotte Goslar's American Ballet Comique; the Opera of Paris; and the Ballet of the Amsterdam Royal Opera. Then there will be a Balinese and Hindu evening; and Antonio's Spanish company, with 35 dancers. Over and above, there will be a presentation of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, with the Singers of La Scala Milan, and with the participation of the Amsterdam Ballet (choreography by John Taras), the Concerts Colonne orchestra, costumes by Singier, and decors by Leo Ricci.

Serge Lifar and Yvette Chauvire will illustrate a concert of Choreographic Music, with the Monte Carlo orchestra; and there will also be an evening of Films of the Dance.

GERMANY

BERLIN MANNHEIM FRANKFURT MUNICH

Eva Bulow

Berlin

TATJANA Gsorvsky is organising a company called "BALLET THEATRE BERLIN," consisting of fourteen dancers and a repertory of T. Gsovsky's ballets. Rehearsals will begin in July, and works in preparation are *Hamlet* (Blacher), *Idiot* (Henze), *Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (Beethoven), *Bolero* (Ravel), *Souvenir* (Offenbach) *Labryinth* (Sonnenburg), and *Signale* (Klebe). The premiere will be during the next Berlin Festival 1955, at the Titania Palace during September, and later the troupe will go on tour through the USA for two months. Fifty performances are scheduled in New York, Washington, Philadelphia and Chicago. Among the soloists are Gisela Deege, Natascha Trofimova, Gert Reinholm, Harald Horn, Grete Sellier and Ralf Smolik.

During a matinée at the Hebbel Theatre Berlin eight young dancers were presented in ballets by T. Gsovsky, L. Sevelin and R. Köchermann. All are members of the Staedtische Oper and pupils of the choerographers. Köchermann, is premier danseur at the State Opera, and next year will occupy this position at the State Theatre, Frankfurt. Tana Herzberg was the highlight in the programme. Together with Manfred Taubert she appeared in *Pas Classique* and *In A Boat*, a charming dance poem by T. Gsovsky, while Constance Herzfeld danced a pas de deux from *The Sleeping Beauty*, Marion Schnelle *Cakewalk* by Debussy, and Hella Troester in a *Habanera* by the same composer.

Mannheim

Roland Petit, with his Ballet de Paris presented in 1948 an unforgettable performance of *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit*. Now Lisa Kretschmar has devised her own choreography to the Francaix music and dances the role of Agathe with the company of the National Theatre. Her guest partner is Roger George.

Frankfurt

Herbert Freund's latest works are *Circulus Vitiosus* with music by Christoph von Dohnanyi and *The Glove* by Gerhard Wimberger. Unfortunately both scores are so bad that choreographer and dancers were greatly limited, but in spite of this, Irene Mann danced with taste. The final Sauguet ballet *Oedipus and the Sphinx* was the best and here Svea Köller and Paul Herbinger gave interesting interpretations. The next premiere will be in May with *Don Quichotte* and *Monmartre* by H. Reuter. Herbert Freund has engaged as guest artist, Wiet Palar, from Amsterdam for the principal parts.

Axel Kaun

on German debut of

ALAN CARTER

THE Munich State Opera Ballet has just had a glittering and highly exciting first night—the German debut of Alan Carter. There was an astonishing ovation from every part of the house, which included balletomanes from all over Germany. The new choreographer and producer of four delightful works took numerous curtain calls with his wife Joan Harris, who is assisting him, with a revitalised company, Hans Gierster and Sigi Mayr, the conductors, and Werner Schachteli, a new discovery in the field of modern stage design. It was certainly a remarkable evening all around for, although some opera-fans and sophisticated people present approached ballet cautiously on the ground that it lacks the sustained intellectual subtlety they find in 'Lohengrin' or 'Antigone', all agreed with the cheering audience that there, at last, for the first time in Germany was an original production of intellectual interest.

Carter was able to put on stage a programme of ballets consisting of very different works to suit all tastes. Three months of concentrated classes, and rehearsals had produced immense disciplinary and technical progress in the 36 members of the company. Small roles were danced with an attention to detail I have not seen before with this company. The boredom of monotonous movements overloaded by the so called 'Expressionism' which has been all too common in Germany, gave way to a lot of fine ideas realized in true balletic form. Thus the 'Pas de Trois' from *Swan Lake* showed the result of real artistry through hard schooling. Nika Sanftleben here displays a very pure style in this old masterpiece; and Inge Bertl, a talented newcomer with strength and attack, has only just attained soloist status. They were partnered by Franz Baur, a dancer first discovered by Victor Gsovsky.

With the first presentation of *Four by Four* (Vier mal Vier) a cheerful frolic which fitted the charming music from 'Tombeau de Couperin' by Ravel, Carter proved to be a modern choreographer of the first rank. The work can perhaps be described as an essay in the manner of Balanchine's *Bourree Fantasques*. It is both gay and subtle, and gives the choreographer wide opportunity for geometrical and poetical groupings, intricate steps and movements for the whole company. I doubt however whether Carter was right to introduce such a work so soon. It is rather too long, and the company is not yet able to cope with the necessary mimetic finesse this rhythmic mood of the 18th century requires.

The Miraculous Mandarin with its dynamic score by Bartok is one of those big plot-and-character-ballets which is based a little obscurely on the story by Melchor Lenghyl. Because of its "immoral flavour" the ballet was banned in 1929 after its premierè at Cologne by the former Mayor Konrad Adenauer. Carter has turned it into one of the most exciting melodramas, and some spectacular bits of stagecraft and Werner Schachteli's picturesque settings combined to make it the artistic triumph of the evening. It was powerful theatre and brilliantly portrayed by Natasha Trofimova in the leading role. The two villains, Heino Hallhuber and Franz Baur, were like tense jackals who had learnt the modern American dance. Not forgetting the German public's love for 'a deeper meaning', Carter's version of the bloodthirsty story becomes touchingly human. Different from any other part in the repertory it appears to be entirely modern-dance, but it has undoubted classical affinities.

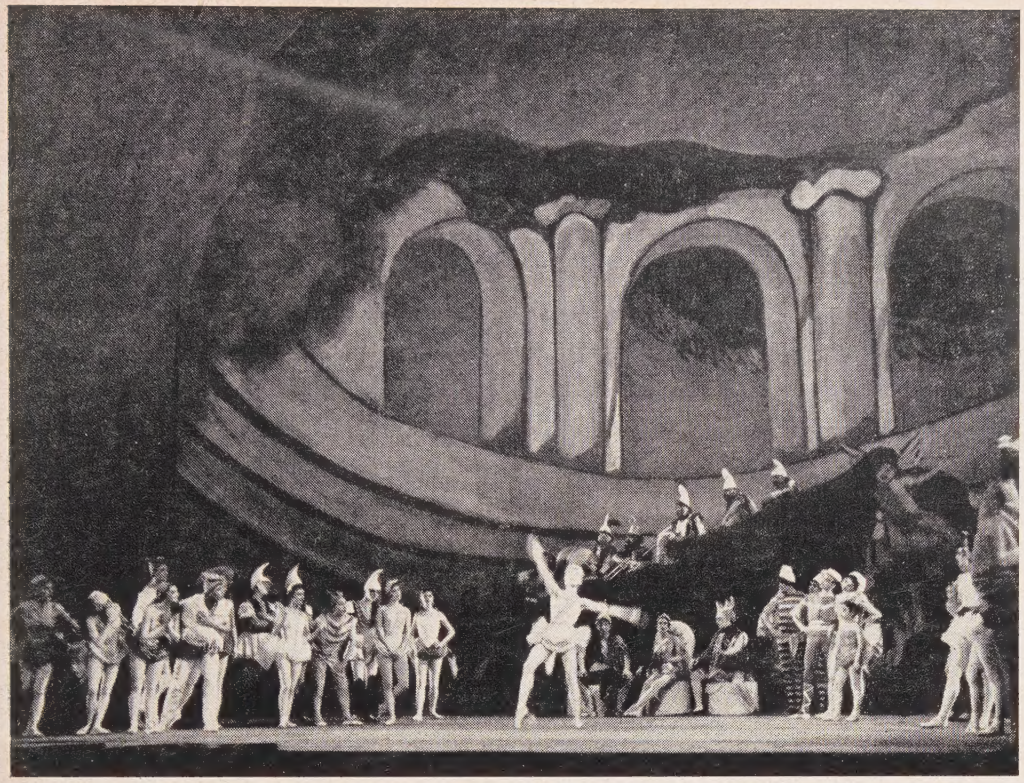
There is attention to good theatre and teamwork, as well as to the traditional Ivanov-manner in the two-scene-arrangement of the *Nutcracker*. Though compressed it keeps the formal continuity of the venerable fairy-tale, and complete with all the touchingly 1890 ballet conventions—pantomime-scene with little Clara; ballroom dance; grand pas de deux; divertissement and Ballabile—all of them strung in a row in a story nobody will pay attention to.

The new born star Veronika Mlakar as the Sugar Plum Fairy was much more than nice to see. She looks like a ballerina to come with all the facilities of a lovely virtuoso, and she has natural gifts for a rapid and strong grace. Her partner was Heino Hallhuber, a dancer with remarkable fire, rather too elementary to be a danseur noble, but to see the quality of his lovely brise voles and batterie, his elevation and ability to turn is delightful and impressive.

Taking the evening as a whole the Munich-Opera-Ballet is really on the way to make its mark in the world of choreography. Many experts and ballet-lovers think it is high time that this country's ballet was given a wider understanding so as to counteract the general German prejudice against it.

Moreover some companies from abroad such as Balanchine's New York City Ballet, the Ballet Theatre of Lucia Chase, and Catherine Dunham with her overwhelming exotic productions, have also vastly increased public interest and made comparison possible. A step towards general understanding was the lecture tour of Mr. Arnold Haskell from London, who emphazised that there is a considerable talent in Germany which only requires the right opportunity to be developed.

Axel Kaun



Two new Serge Lido pictures from the John Cranko ballet.

below : Yvette Chauvire and Michel Renault.

Decor : Vertes.

REYNA FROM PARIS

LA BELLE HELENE

THE ballet '*La Belle Helene*', presented on 6th April at the Theatre National de l'Opera de Paris, based on Offenbach's celebrated light opera, and with choreography by the British choreographer John Cranko, was a genuine success for both author and artists.

The old libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halevy was elaborated for this occasion by Marcel Achard and Robert Manuel, in order to adapt it to the four tableaux of the ballet. The music, likewise, was placed for re-orchestration in the hands of Louis Aubert and Rosenthal. They have, perhaps, somewhat weighted Offenbach's light, delicate music, with the result that many celebrated airs sound rather stifled under the gilding of the great Theatre. John Cranko's choreography presents us with good lively movement, well linked between the four tableaux. Mr. Cranko certainly had no easy task because the accepted style at the Opera is always a little pompous and solemn—in spite of which certain dashes of humour even clowning, surprised but did not shock the habitués of the Opera. So it has come about that there was no revolution at the Opera de Paris on account of '*La Belle Helene*'—rather did people welcome the addition to the repertoire of a ballet in a new, gay, light style—the sort of thing which is nowadays presented by the big companies like Anton Dolin's or Balanchine's, but which has been missing at the Opera. It may have dragged a little in parts, and there were some repetitions in the 'Dance Competition' scene; but the seduction scene, played between Paris and Helen in the latter's room, was irresistibly droll—but always kept within the limits of an elegant tone.

Cranko's choreography avoided showing off extremes of acrobatics or virtuosity which would have weighted the composition : but his variations and 'pas de deux' were far from simple and, if they looked easy, it was a homage to the very type of ballet —delicate, light, and without heaviness—to which '*La Belle Helene*' belongs.

As for the interpretation, we may say at once that the *corps de ballet* of the Opera gave us the happiest of surprises. Before the first performance, people were asking themselves how it would adapt itself to this new style after having always interpreted strictly classical or neo-classical works. In the event, never has the *corps de ballet* appeared more at its ease, prettier or fresher, than in Vertes' Greco-Parisian costumes. But the real triumph of the evening was scored by Yvette Chauvire, who gave a masterly interpretation of the role of Helen. Henceforth, we must add our recollections of her in this role (very Parisian, in spite of the Homeric setting) to our memories of Giselle, the Swan, and Odette; she has something of the supreme elegance of Offenbach's interpreters, in the days of the Archdukes, of horse-cabs and Maxim's

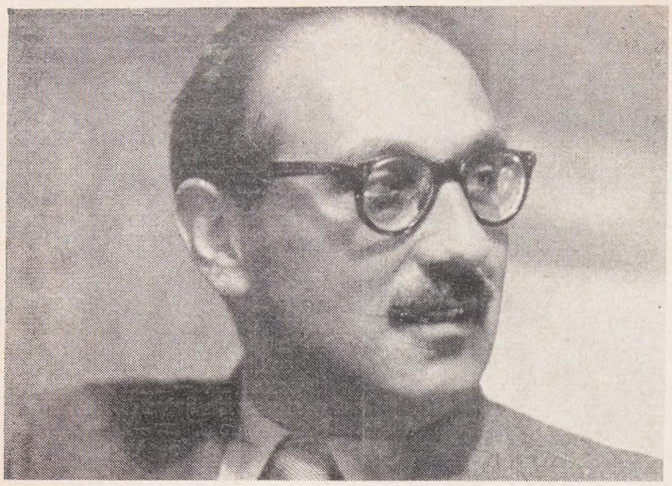
Playing this somewhat 'common' role, Yvette Chauvire danced without the least vulgarity, like an artist creating a real part, instead of giving us an elementary sketch of it in the steps laid down for her.

Michel Renault was Paris, the seducer. Very good-looking, never dull, the great French dancer interpreted his role with feigned nonchalance, almost with ingenuousness—like a young God who is ravishing but does'nt know it. Claude Bessy—deservedly—got the part of Venus; Max Bozzoni was Agamemnon; Micheline Grimoin and Josette Amiel (premieres danseuses) and Even ('grand sujet') were delightful as three young goddesses.

The painter Vertès designed the four scenes of the Ballet with faultless taste, spirit and finesse—qualities which also showed themselves in his costumes, a transposition of Grecian into modern style. The Opera orchestra was conducted by M. Robert Blot.

All in all, both critics and public gave a good reception to Offenbach's (and Cranko's) '*La Belle Helene*'. There may have been some reservations about certain dashes of humour inserted into the Ballet, but they did not detract from its success.

'At last! An amusing Ballet at the Opera!' said the spectators after the first performance.



MUSICIAN AT THE BALLET

BY

MONTAGUE CALMAN

SPICE OF LIFE

SHE was young, she was beautiful, and she wanted to impress with her wisdom. "Variety is the spice of life," she told her swain as they sipped coffee in Covent Garden's Crush Bar. And she was right there. One of the major problems facing both the Royal Opera House and Sadler's Wells Theatre ballet companies is the task of bringing excitement of performance where variety is replaced by repetition. By the very nature of its existence a repertory company puts tremendous strain on its conductors and orchestra, for there is little to enliven the nightly routine performance. One is so much like another. And that is why only dynamic direction, inspired leadership and a feel for one's vocation can raise repertory performances to pulsating performances.

That either of these two Companies ever rises to the special occasion is to their credit, for the circumstances are difficult. Yet in the last month a sense of special events seemed to motivate one or two of the evenings of ballet. While commendable in themselves, these outstanding revelations of what can be done when an effort is made only spotlight those dreadful lapses we sometimes experience.

MADAME CHRYSANTHÈME

Robert Irving conducting the Royal Opera House Orchestra for the world premiere of *Madame Chrysanthème* was certainly inspired by the occasion for his players were in fine fettle that evening. Alan Rawsthorne specially wrote the music for Ashton's choreographic treatment of Pierre Loti's story. This is the yarn that inspired Puccini to write his *Madame Butterfly*. But here was no Puccini lyricism. In the begining of the work Rawsthorne kept very close to his own *Symphonic Studies* and that is not balletic music. On the first hearing of the music I found it monotonous and lacking in the sparkle of inventive composition. The string writing was thin and most of it jotted, jumped and darted around but hardly ever got anywhere. I could see no musical reason for the unaccompanied soprano (Joyce Livingstone) opening the ballet. It neither set the dramatic scene nor did it evoke the atmosphere of Japan, and that also applies to the whole work which I found neither Japanese in idiom nor dramatically excursive musically. For some mysterious reason the piano is used for percussive effect and this distracted me considerably. Rawsthorne does not give us genuine Japanese music for the exciting Ashton sword dance, and the music for the witty hornpipe was dehyderated and shallow.

On my second hearing the overscored music crammed full of notes simply crowded out any dramatic continuity. I was pleasantly moved by some of the brass writing, which under Robert Irving's direction was exceedingly brilliant in performance. I gathered little else positive from the music itself, although, of course, Ashton's choreography is superbly done and full of subtle emphasis. As a ballet it will rank as one of Ashton's most inspired and successful.

Robert Irving kept his players on their toes for the remainder of the programme. *Mam'zelle Angot* was beautifully played. With a steady beat for his players, Irving secured fluid playing especially from the woodwind section. After Rawsthorne with the rickety rickshaw jumble, the lyrical flow of rich melodic sound from the selected works of Charles Lecocq was truly welcome. Gordon Jacob was responsible for the orchestrations.

NEW WELLS SEASON

The opening of a new short season at the Sadler's Wells Theatre seemed to have been a special occasion for conductor John Lanchbery, as well.

That night there were three works performed: *Danses Concertantes* (Stravinsky's arid goods yard shunting noises off), *Cafe Des Sports* (music by Antony Hopkins), and *The Rake's Progress*. It was the last work that stood out though all three were well played by the orchestra.

Gavin Gordon wrote a brilliantly imaginative score for *The Rake's Progress* which fits the period of William Hogarth admirably. To capture that mood in modern musical writing is an achievement, and I only realised how well it was done by noting how unobtrusively the minuet fell in with the rest of the work. There is a Verdian quality in the dramatic flow of this music with its particular pathos in the cello writing. The score opens with a full blooded example of fine brass, followed by some stylishly written period music. The orgy scene is full of gusto and the orchestra played robustly. The interlude music was full of profound feeling. For the mad-house scene the writing was stark and descriptive. Gordon was creatively original when handling the gambling scene. A delightfully tuneful theme represents the shaking of the dice, and this is indeed ballet music. An unimaginative composer would have given us either the clickety-click of the dice being rattled in the box, or left the stage noise to suggest the action. Gavin Gordon supplied the music, as a composer should. The orchestra played superbly.

UNAFFECTED CHARM

Another special event was the visit of the Bulgarian State Song and Dance Company to the Winter Garden Theatre. Unlike Antonio and his Spanish Company (just ended at the Saville Theatre) who enslave by the elegance of their sophisticated stylised entertainment, the Bulgarian Company captivates by charm and simplicity of unaffected folklore. The orchestra accompanying the dancers is an odd collection of players showing the influence of the Turkish occupation of Bulgaria many years ago. Their peasant instruments consisted of a drum, bagpipes of strange pig-like shapes, KAVALS, (sounding like flutes and looking much like recorders), and GADOULKAS, an early type of pear shaped viol. The music is unlike most we hear and it took some time to accustom my ears to the Eastern wail. Yet I enjoyed it all. Discipline, enthusiasm and earthy freshness were the outstanding characteristics of these people who are still untouched by Western influences of theatrical and musical expression.

MORE REVIEWS

Now let us look at some of the other ballet programmes in London last month.

At the Royal Opera House *Checkmate* was given under the direction of Irving. This was a distinctive interpretation, quite different from the recent ones conducted by the composer himself, Arthur Bliss, Master of the Queen's Music. While not as taut as the Bliss versions, Irving produced an athletic performance full of vigour, though lacking the dramatic tension that highlighted the composer's readings. Irving secured some beautiful playing from the woodwinds.

It would have been bad enough to have heard the performance of *Three Cornered Hat* (Royal Opera House) as it was given at Covent Garden, before Antonio, but afterwards it was just punishment. Spanish music, especially that of Manuel de Falla must have a lilt. The rhythm and the beat of the heel tap must blend in with the music. But sad to say Alexander Grant, whose other ballet performances I admire, was too, too sadly non-Latin in this essentially Spanish dance. Nor did Robert Irving, conducting, ride the gaily given joys of de Falla. And I do not finds words easily to express my horror as I heard an all too-refined chorus bleat out "OLÉ, OLÉ, OLÉ." OLÉ, shouted out before the curtain rises can be effective; it is Spanish; it is full of passion; it screams out for vitality: Can someone tell the Royal Opera House sweeties this ?

REST IN PEACE

Poor Robert Irving ! How I sympathised with him as he has to direct those crushing chords of boredom in *Sylvia* (Royal Opera House). An impressively expensive remounting announced the revival at Covent Garden of something best left in the graveyards of the ballets of yesteryear. The music is tea shop standard of the most sugary and the least inventive. It just pours out like insipid tea from a cold pot. Irving, poor fellow, had his orchestra playing but could not convince them. Who could ? Weak Wagner flashing over simpering sentences of musical muck is my verdict of Leo Delibes's music for *Sylvia*. As I left Covent Garden's Opera House I wondered why so much money, time and effort had been lavishly spent on this revival. Could Ashton really have felt artistically satisfied with his complicated

—continued on next page

BACKSTAGE

ARTISTS from the Bulgarian State Song and Dance Company gave a dance recital on television on April 24th. This followed their appearance in London at the Winter Garden Theatre.

SVETLANA Beriosova made her tenth BBC Television appearance when she appeared in the *Music for You* programme on April 25th.

PIGEON Crowles new book *Enter the Ballerina* will be published in October of this year. Written on the varied lives of seven famous dancers, it takes the reader backstage and shows how a ballerina is made. The book will have a coloured frontispiece, and will include many illustrations. Publishers : Faber & Faber price 12/6d.

EN Avant announce in their March bulletin that Poul Gnatt, the New Zealand Ballet Co. will be leaving the company after the May-August tour of its members for a short visit to this country and France and will then proceed to his native Denmark where he will dance with his parent company, the Royal Danish Ballet. The purpose of this trip is to collect musical scores and choreographic scripts and study the new trends of ballet in Europe. On his return to New Zealand Mr. Gnatt plans to increase both the number of dancers working on a professional basis, and also the number of tours and performances of the full company in the various centres of New Zealand.

PLAYERS' Theatre presented during May an up-to-the-minute musical play *Twenty Minutes South*. Production is by Hattie Jacques with dances arranged by Ian Stuart.

DEBBIE Reynolds' most essential "props" during rehearsal for M-G-M's musical *Hit the Deck* were sets of knee and elbow pads. During her strenuous number she was tossed in the air and caught on the rebound by 28 male dancers, then at the finale whirled around by the ankles by Tony Martin and Vic Damone.

FESTIVAL Ballet will tour the provinces for twelve weeks after their London season which ends on September 10th. Negotiations are now under way for a Continental tour in 1956, during which it is hoped they will play their usual winter Monte Carlo date for about four weeks.

DANILOVA guest artist with Festival Ballet during their London season will be appearing in most of their repertoire and also in her own ballet *Mademoiselle Fifi*.

WRITING to tell me how much he enjoys reading Ballet Today, a reader from Australia laments "Australian newspapers do not employ their own Ballet critics, the very best we can expect is that the music critic should spare some of his time for ballet, and on one occasion last year we were privileged to read a review of a Borovansky first night written by no less eminent a personage than the paper's third-string football writer."

THE Association of Dance Writers and Critics saluted the young British choreographer John Cranko at a friendly lunch—when all the Ballet critics of Paris, and a number of other personalities of the world of art and letters, congregated at the elegant Club Saint-Jacques, near the Champs Elysées.

THE Marquis de' Cuevas' Grand Ballet will dance at the Theatre des Champs Elysees from 4th October next. It is also announced that Oleg Briansky, who was the star of 'Ballets des Champs Elysées' and of the London Festival Ballet, has been engaged by the Marquis and will make his debut after the Cairo season in May.

THREE young danseuses have made their debut with the troupe; Edmée Redouin, who appeared with Roland Petit, Alice Bess of the 'Ballets des Champs Elysees,' and Jacqueline Toussainte, a pupil of Madame Vronska and first-prize winner at the Conservatoire de Paris. The dancer Gerard Ohn, who was with the Ballets des Champs Elysees, is also a member of the Cuevas company.

ANA Ricarda, choreographer of *Ines De Castro*, *La Terulia*, and *Del Amor Y De La Muerte*, is preparing a new ballet inspired by a Chinese legend. A young British composer is writing the music of this ballet, the star of which will be Marjorie Tallchief.

WHILE awaiting the return of Rosella Hightower, the Marquis de Cuevas has re-engaged John Taras as Ballet Master.

AT the Casino at Enghien, near Paris, there will be in June a series of choreographic spectacles in which Colette Marchand, Jean Babilee, Mlkhorad Miskovitch and Serge Perrault will take part.

MAUREEN Bruce, the wife of Donald Britton principal dancer of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, will be rejoining the company at the end of their London season.

THERE are to be several changes and new faces in the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Michael Boulton is to join them from the Covent Garden Company; whilst David Poole and Gilbert Vernon will be leaving them to take up positions elsewhere. Maryon Lane and Annette Page are to join the Sadler's Wells Company at Covent Garden. Patricia Miller is also to leave the Theatre Ballet.

OUR congratulations are extended to John Cranko for his successful production of *La Belle Helene* at the Paris Opera House for which he has devised the choreography, see Ferdinand Reyna's review on another page: incidentally it was also the last production to take place under Maurice Lehmann's directorship. He retires this year on the termination of his three year term of office.

PATRICIA Jordan, a former student at the International School of Ballet, is to join the Opera ballet at the Glyndebourne Festival this year, for which Pauline Grant is devising the choreography.

IT is regretfully announced that the New York City ballet will not be visiting England this year; they will however be presenting a short season in Paris on their European tour.

THE American tour of the Sadler's Wells Company is to be a much shorter one than the last. They will only be playing about six or seven dates; the longest of which will be at the Metropolitan House, New York, where they will be for over a month.

FOR Kenneth MacMillans new ballet *House of Birds*, John Lancberry has orchestrated a selection of Mompou's piano music. Nicholas Georgiadis is to be responsible for the decor; it will be remembered he also designed Kenneth MacMillan's last ballet *Danses Concertantes*.

APRIL Olrich, a former soloist with the Sadler's Wells Company is to dance in Laurier Lister's new revue. It will be remembered that she achieved notable success in the short-lived revue at the Saville Theatre *Pay the Piper* some months previous.

VALERIE Taylor is to dance the role of the Miller's Wife in *The Three Cornered Hat*. The role of the Miller will be danced by **Pirmin Trecu.** It will be his first principal role since joining the company at Covent Garden.

ON the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet's summer tour there are to be three new Swanhildes in *Coppelia* **Sara Neil, Doreen Tempest and Maureen Bruce.**

Michael Boulton is to dance the Captain in *Pineapple Poll* with **Patricia Cox** as Poll herself.

Musician at the Ballet (contd.)

choreographic attempt to recapture an age gone by ? Were the two Ironsides really happy to resuscitate scenery of a world left behind ? Did the dancers feel artistically impelled to stop counting and give expression to their movements ? And could Robert Irving, and at later performances, Anatole Fistoulari, be expected to revitalise Delibes at his least imaginative ? No one can breathe oxygen into a completely lifeless body. *Sylvia*, then R.I.P.

BALLETIC PATTERN

KISMET (The Stoll Theatre) has the famous Borodin POLOVZTIAN DANCES from *Prince Igor* as a background for the home-sick Amazonian Princesses who do not like Bagdad. But it is the savage rhythm of percussion used as a solo in two dance numbers that thrilled me more than either the tremendous spectacle or the witty book. Alfred Drake who stars is not only an actor and singer. He is a choreographer of his own body. Every stance, each movement, and all his gestures form a balletic pattern in making it theatrically dramatic or humorous. The orchestra played well for *Kismet* but whether Borodin was satisfied was not notified to us by Saint Peter at the Gates of Heaven.

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NEW YORK

HOPE SHERIDAN

THE winter season in New York has slipped over into Spring with not very much to recommend it, with three possible exceptions: the return of Escudero to give us 'youngsters' a flash of this once-phenomenal man; a new and charming Pas de Trois by Balanchine; the return of Toumanova after almost ten years' absence.

Beginning February 7th, Vincente Escudero brought his company of Spanish artists to the Playhouse on Forty-eighth Street for a two week season. His two personal partners were Carmita Garcia, who danced with him on his last American tour in 1935 and a newcomer, Maria Marquez. "The Bailete" consisted of Rosario Escudero, Maria Amaya (sister of Carmen Amaya), Pepita Valle, Mario Escudero, Chiquito de Levante, Jose Barrera, Manolo Vazquez, Antonita Millan, Jose Melero, Pepe La Matrona and Pablo Miquel (pianist).

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

Highlights of the evening were 62 year-old Escudero himself, 74 year-old flamenco cantador, Pepe La Matrona, and Carmita Garcia. Escudero's heel work continues to be almost incredible and it is only in moments of extreme bodily movement that we are even reminded he is an old man. For many of us who have never seen Escudero before this is indeed a glimpse into the past. What a stage personality of fire and salt this man must have been! How simple and knowledgeable dance becomes in the hands of two people who have danced together for many years and now know each other's minds as well as movements . . .witness the really superb SEVILLA as danced by Escudero and his partner, Carmita Garcia . . .wonderful improvisation with a relaxed, casual air.

Escudero's company, outside of the veterans, consists of a group of talented and exuberant youngsters. The company as a unit has musicianship, style and range. It played to a series of sold-out houses.

The recent experiment by the State Department, in its new International Exchange programme (administered by ANTA) of sending Jose Limon on a brief South American tour has proved successful. On the whole, the entire repertoire of 14 works has been well received and the tour is considered to be artistically and diplomatically successful.

The New York City Ballet opened its winter season at the New York City Centre on February 15th. Missing from the company was Janet Reed, whose comedy talents are in sore need. Miss Reed is on indefinite leave of absence which we all hope will not be too indefinite. Back with the company however, is Melissa Hayden after the birth of a son. On the opening night Melissa Hayden danced very well in *Con Amore*.

DISAPPOINTING PREMIERE

The first premiere of the season on February 23rd turned out to be the disappointing *Roma*. Even sets by Eugene Berman, lighting by Jean Rosenthal and dancing by LeClerq and Eglevsky could not help this Balanchine work overcome the indifference of George Bizet's music. The programme notes tell us this is seldom-performed Bizet . . . . .small wonder. The ballet is divided into three musical parts, Scherzo, Adagio, Carnaval (Tarantella). Perhaps the finest section of this undistinguished ballet is the Adagio which is difficult, sustained and fraught with some very tricky partnering. There is, for example, a series of sustained passages in an off-balance arabesque, first right then left, in which the girl (LeClerq) supported by her partner (Eglevsky) is like some tenuous violin bow being drawn through muted legato movements. Yet the pas de deux does not build to either a choreographic or musical climax. During the last movement, Berman's Roman decor, like some sun-baked Piranesi square, included some incongruous clothes lines.

DANCERS' BALLET

Highlight of the season, at least for lovers of classical dance, and that does not include many reviewers, but it *does* include this one, was Balanchine's new divertissement, *Pas de Trois (II)* premiered on March 1st. Like Glinka's music to which it is set, it is not boisterous or rousing, rather it is lyrical, more subtle, yet charming. It is indeed a dancers' ballet; a veritable study in classical technique. Unlike the standard pas de deux or trois format of duet, solo, solo, coda, the new *Pas de Trois II* follows the more musical form of solo, duo and trio virtuosi. However, this is not just another pas de trois, it has been a good 15 to 17 years since I have seen so many steps from the male classical vocabulary on stage in one or two variations. Of course, placing a difficult classical challenge in the path of Andre Eglevsky is like asking a child if he would like some candy. Eglevsky's feats on stage this night must certainly make him one of the seven wonders of our dance world. Classical dancing with such consummate ease appears only when this man is performing. I believe it would be no boast to say that there is no one on stage today who would have attempted the male variation in its present form. Patricia Wilde acquits herself very well in a brilliant version of her own, and Melissa Hayden dances her lyrical passages in perfect keeping with Glinka's intent. The new pas de trois has one serious flaw which may or may not determine its longevity in the repertoire: it is designed for dancers, students of the dance, and members of the audience with technical knowledge, it is much less a piece for laymen.

Notable new performance of the season is the young Barbara Milberg in the role of *Profane Love* in *ILLUMINATIONS*. It has a depth and an animal quality completely her own. This comes as something of a surprise from a dancer seen heretofore in only lyrical roles.

NOSTALGIC PROGRAMME

Ballet Theatre will return to the Metropolitan Opera House on April 12th for its 15th Anniversary Season. The season is scheduled to extend through May 1st. Twenty former members of the Ballet Theatre will return to the company to help celebrate its gala season. Among them are Alicia Markova, Anton Dolin, Hugh Laing, Mary Ellen Moylan, Tatiana Riabouchinska, Viola Essen, Annabelle Lyon, Maria Karnilova, Edward Caton, David Nillo, Donald Saddler, Muriel Bentley, Paula Lloyd, Sona Osato and Nicolas Orloff. Patricia Bowman has just been signed to replace Nana Gollner, out with an injured foot. Regulars of the company are Alicia Alonso, Igor Youskevitch, Nora Kaye, John Kriza, Ruth Ann Koesun, Eric Braun, Lupe Serrano, Erik Bruhn and Sonia Arova. S. Hurok will be back to manage the company and the repertoire is simply loaded with nostalgia. Tudor's *Lilac Gardens*, *Gala Performance*, *Pillar of Fire*, and *Romeo and Juliet*; Massine's *Aleko*; Fokine's *Bluebeard*; Agnes de Mille's *Three Virgins and a Devil*; and Lichine's *Graduation Ball* will all be restored for the gala season. Choreographers De Mille and Tudor are even scheduled to appear in some of their own works.

Louis Horst, one of the mentors and pioneers of modern dance has been honoured with this year's Capezio Award for achievement in the field of dance.

The National Ballet of Canada has made a fairly successful debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on March 25th and 26th. The company is headed by Celia Franca, Lois Smith, David Adams, James Ronaldson, Lillian Jarvis, Colleen Kenney, Ray Moller, Irene Apine, and Angela Leigh.

CHICAGO

GEORGE J. JACKSON

THE new year began with fiery competition. *Jose Greco's Spanish Dancers* at the Civic Opera House and *Teresa and Luisillo's Spanish Ballet* at the Great Northern Theatre fought for the favour of Chicago's audiences and critics. The majority verdict decided for Teresa and Luisillo.

The Canadian National Ballet followed the victors at the Great Northern. In complete versions of *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia* and *Giselle*, in Anthony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*, *Offenbach in the Underworld* and *Gala Performance*, in Joey Harris' *Barbara Allen*, in *Les Sylphides* and in a one act version of *The Nutcracker*, this troupe of student dancers demonstrated that they may soon attain professional status. Celia Franca, the company's only mature performer, is also its founder and artistic director. In the title role of *Giselle*, hers was not a great performance but a fine miniature despite occasionally fussy hands, In *Offenbach*, Franca's impersonation of "Alexandra Danilova" was almost as hilarious as is the incomperable Danilova herself. This Tudor Ballet, often a clumsy satire of Massine's comic style, has as high points, beside Franca's performance, a can-can à la *Moulin Rouge* and the

Review

entrance of a Nutcrackeresque, wonder-struck "Clara" upon a stage filled with dead drunk dancers. Celia Franca's finest interpretation was in *Lilac Garden*; as the mistress, she alone gave emotional dimension to an otherwise flat performance of a modern classic. David Adams, the Canadian ballet's first male soloist, is yet too pudgily adolescent to appear the true classical dancer. Lois Smith, called by some "Canada's snowy version of England's verdant Elaine Fifield," is Franca's heir apparent. Two Latvian dancers now with the Canadian ballet are Irene Apine and Jury Gotshalks. Usually cast as a soubrette, Apine strives too obviously for style and technical accomplishment; only as the deb in *Offenbach* does she achieve the easy mastery which is prerequisite for good performance. Gotshalks, an excellent partner, is surprisingly sloppy in solo variations.

A week after the end of the *Canadian National Ballet's* one week season, *Ballet Theatre* at the Civic Opera House, in brilliant form for its 15th anniversary tour, danced much the same repretory as had the Canadians. Although it is known abroad as the *American National Ballet Theatre*, this company is international in the best sense of the word. Three of the leading dancers, Kaye, Kriza and Koesun are American born and trained. Alicia Alonso and Lupe Serrano are Latin Americans, Igor Youskevitch and Sonia Arova are of Slavic origin. Eric Braun is Viennese, Erik Bruhn is Danish. Standard works, revivals and borrowed ballets were performed with the care and vitality usually reserved by this troupe for its new works; perhaps because this year there were no new works. Valerie Bettis' ballet of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, originally performed by the *Slavenska and Franklin Company*, was danced by *Ballet Theatre* with Nora Kaye as Blanche and Youskevitch alternating with John Kriza as Stanley. At once Kaye's Blanche is an obvious psychotic. A development of character with the action, which Slavenska had achieved, is entirely lacking. I have the impression Nora Kaye is following Bert Brecht's dictum that the actor should never "live" his role but only "demonstrate" it. The nevitable result is a case study ather than an art work; the humanity and dignity of the tragic hero, the consequent catharthis for the audiences are not found in this performance. Kaye herself, who has returned to *Ballet Theatre* after several seasons with the *New York City Ballet* and in Japan, has gained a strong classical technique somewhat lacking in lightness; however, I feel she has lost her high degree of dramatic subtlety.

A revival of Massine's *Mam'zelle Angot* was entirely sucessful when Lupe Serrano and Eric Braun replaced Ruth Ann Koesun and John Kriza as the mam'zelle and barber. Sonia Arova made her Chicago debut in the role of the aristocrat. Our patriots hold that Europe can not produce the long limbed dancers frequently seen in America. Arova is more evidence to the contrary and she has a passion to her dancing which is entirely foreign to our native ladies. In Doubujinsky's costume, among his sets, looking like David's finest portrait, Arova was the perfect partner for the virtuoso caricaturist of Erik Bruhn.

Alicia Alonso is *Ballet Theatre's* great romantic ballerina; her *Giselle* and *La Fée Mal Garde* are standards of perfection. I wish I could say the same of her second act *Swan Lake* and past seasons' *Princess Aurora*.

Theatre in the Dance was the title of a programme by José Limon's modern dancers at the Civic Opera House, March 20th. Doris Humphrey's choreography to Mozart's *Fantasy and Fugue in C Major* and *Fugue in C Minor* contained all the classic blunders of plotless ballet (emotion without motive, gesture without meaning, musical irrelevancy) and few of the academic virtues. (tight construction, well defined development, brilliant use of the performer's technical resources). Limon's *The Traitor* was an ingenious exercise in the theatrical use of cloth. The star, a white square of linen, was first employed as the table cloth for a last supper, (dancers holding the material at various positions gave the illusion of ever changing perspective; in effect, the audience was moving and the stage still) the the traitor (Limon) wound the cloth about the leader (Lucas Hoving) as a shroud, thus compelling him by this "betrayal" to be a saviour. Constant overacting reduced what could have been a powerful ballet to interesting experimentation.

Lupe Serrano and John Kriza of Ballet Theatre in Don Quixote.

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The Margot

Ac

NINE years ago, one of the most significant events both in the career of Fonteyn, and in the revival of post-war British ballet took place, Frederick Ashton devised *Symphonic Variations*, an abstract ballet of breathtaking beauty; a ballet which has been acclaimed one of Ashton's greatest works. It was designed for six dancers, all of whom must be able to dance on almost equal terms. The original cast besides Fonteyn included Moira Shearer, Pamela May, Michael Somes, Henry Danton and Brian Shaw; yet Fonteyn still managed to stand out, without ever seeming to appear, as it were, outside the ballet. Her performance was unique in the manner it portrayed the undercurrent of emotion pertaining to the ballet, and with the lyricism with which she expressed it.

MASSINE

In 1947 Leonide Massine joined the company as a guest choreographer and dancer. He was to stage three works for them, *Le Tricorne*, *La Boutique Fantasque* and *Mamzelle Angot*; the first two of which he had originally created for the Diaghilev ballet. Fonteyn danced the role of the Miller's Wife in *Tricorne*, and Mamzelle Angot, whilst Moira Shearer was to appear in *La Boutique Fantasque*; both Fonteyn's roles were diametrically opposed to each other, one being of fiery exotic Spanish blood, the other being of a light-hearted hoydenish nature. In neither ballet did she achieve particular success, yet her portrayal of the Miller's Wife was the more satisfying.

Top : Margot Fonteyn in Daphnis and Chloe (Photo Baron).

Below : Margot Fonteyn and John Field in Tiresias (Photo Roger Wood).

NEW ROLE IN PARIS

The following year she was to appear in two new Ashton ballets, *Scenes de ballet*, with music by Stravinsky, and *Don Juan* to the score by Richard Strauss; but a far more significant stage in the development and growth of Fonteyn's stature as a dancer was to take place. She was to create her first role in a ballet outside England, the role of Agathe in Roland Petit's *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* at the Marigny Theatre in Paris. Unfortunately English audiences have never had the opportunity of seeing Fonteyn in this role, for when the ballet was given in London a year later by Petit's *Ballet de Paris*, Colette Marchand danced the role. During the Paris season, Fonteyn also appeared in excerpts from the *Sleeping Beauty*.

Her trip to Paris had obviously been vastly beneficial to her, for on her return to the Sadler's Wells company, her dancing seemed to assume a new mantle of maturity, style and elegance; but a misfortune was to occur, she hurt her ankle after a performance of *Don Juan*, and Moira Shearer had to dance the opening performance of *Cinderella*, Ashton's first full-length ballet. Fonteyn was not able to appear in the role, which had been originally devised for her, until the February of the following year.

VISIT TO U.S.A.

During 1949 she went to the United States with the Sadler's Wells company on their visit, where she achieved a great personal success.

The following year, she created the dual role of Dulcinea-Aldonza in Ninette de Valois' *Don Quixote*; also the ballerina role in *Ballet Imperial*, which George Balanchine of the New

Fonteyn Story

ree

Twenty-one Dancing years with the Sadler's Wells Ballet

York City Ballet, had been commissioned to revive for an English company. Balanchine's ballet was enthusiastically received, although opinion was divided as to whether Fonteyn was suited to this alien style of choreography. Balanchine's so-called abstract ballet was undoubtedly a worthy addition to the repertoire, and further widened Fonteyn's range of portrayals.

Later in the year she crossed the Atlantic again on the second of the Sadler's Wells American tours.

PORTRAYAL OF CHLOE

During 1951 Frederick Ashton created two new works, both of which were of vital importance to ballet as a whole, and to Fonteyn in particular. She created two more leading roles, that of Chloe in *Daphnis and Chloe*, and the female Tiresias in the ballet of the same name. Although the first night of *Daphnis* only received a lukewarm reception, it has now become acknowledged as one of Ashton's foremost creations. Fonteyn's portrayal of Chloe remains one of her loveliest characterisations; she endows Chloe with a perfect spirit of purity, mingled with the essence of spring and youth.

FONTEYN'S FAVOURITE

Tiresias at its first performance received a very different reception. A storm of controversy burst about the heads of the late Constant Lambert, who was responsible for the book and music, Frederick Ashton, and the management of the company. Both the public and the press were divided, many being torn 'twixt two loyalties. The *pas de deux* which Ashton had devised for Fonteyn and John Field in the second scene was full of choreographic invention, and remained one of the highlights of the ballet; incidentally it has long been mentioned that her role in *Tiresias*, is her favourite in a modern work.

AWARD

In the birthday honours, for her work for British ballet, she was officially honoured with the award of the C.B.E.

In 1952 Ashton devised another full-length ballet, *Sylvia*, which was presented at Covent Garden in September; Fonteyn danced the name role, with Michael Somes as Aminta. From the end of that year until March of the next, she suffered an enforced rest from all dancing due to illness.

Her first role on her return to Covent Garden was as the Woman in the Ball-dress in the revival of *Apparitions*. Soon her confidence had been restored, for a month or so later she appeared in the new production of *Le Lac des Cygnes*.

Margot Fonteyn, John Hart and Brian Shaw in Sylvia (*Photo Felix Fonteyn*).

OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

On June 2nd Ashton presented his coronation ballet, *Homage to the Queen*, in which Fonteyn danced the Queen of the Air. Ashton had devised a *pas de deux* for her and Somes of acrobatic beauty, her success was outstanding.

The last great role she created was that of the Firebird in Fokine's ballet, which was revived at the 1954 Edinburgh festival. Fonteyn was guided in her role by Tamara Karsavina, who created the role in the original production.

During her stay with the Sadler's Wells company, Fonteyn has toured America three times, and now is preparing to go for a fourth time. She has appeared in Milan, Granada, Belgrade, Paris, Amsterdam, Florence, Ankarah, to name but a few of the European towns and cities in which she has danced.

No article on Fonteyn would ever be complete without mentioning the part played by Vera Volkova, her teacher, in the shaping of her dancing.

MARRIAGE

In the February of this year Margot Fonteyn married Dr. Roberto Arias, who is the first Panamanian ambassador to this country. We hope that she will continue to grace the stage of Covent Garden with her presence for many more years to come.

Perhaps a true reflection of the character of Margot Fonteyn is mirrored in the fact that only recently she expressed the desire to appear again in Fokine's *Les Sylphides*; a role in which, in the past, the essentials have somehow managed to elude her. Her determination to prove that she was prepared to appear in the ballet again as a *prima ballerina assoluta*, is typical of the spirit of Britain's greatest ballerina.

V.C.

This third chapter concludes the present Margot Fonteyn series. Numbers one and two are still available from Ballet Today office, price 1/3d. each, post paid.

July Ballet Today will contain Cover page Maryon Lane Review and pictures of "House of Birds"

SHURALE A TATAR BALLET

THE première of the ballet "*Shurale*" by the Tatar composer Farid Yarullin was held five years ago at the Kirov Opera House in Leningrad. It was a highly successful first night, but when the dancers answered the curtain call they were accompanied only by the producer L. Yakobson and the stage designers A. Ptushko and L. Milchin. The composer was not among them; Farid Yarullin lost his life at the very beginning of the war.

The gifted young man Farid Yarullin studied from 1933 to 1939 in the composer's class of the Tatar musical studio at the Moscow Conservatory under the guidance of Professor G. Litvinsky. The young composer had written over a hundred songs and several chamber and orchestral works.

The libretto for "*Shurale*" was written by the Tatar writer A. Faizi and maître de ballet L. Yakobson on themes of Tatar fairy tales and legends. The ballet was completed by the composer in 1941. It was then that L. Yakobson staged it at the Tatar State Opera House in Kazan.

Nine years later, in 1950, the ballet was produced, as already mentioned above, on the stage of the Kirov Opera House in Leningrad. Recently Muscovites saw it at the Filiate of the Bolshoi Theatre.

A scene from the Tatar Ballet Shurale

THE STORY

Shurale is the lord of thick, impassable forests, an enemy of people, an enemy of all that is bright and pure. He is the ruler over witches and devils. That is how he is depicted in Tatar fairy tales and legends, and that is how he was described in the tales of the classical writer of Tatar literature Gabdulla Tukai. which served as the basis for the libretto.

. . .White birds come down in a forest glade. Throwing off their wings they turn into pretty girls, the most beautiful of whom is Suimbike. The girls whirl around in a superb dance. Shurale steals the wings of Suimbike, and she makes a futile attempt to get out of the forest. All the other birds fly away. Batyr, a young hunter, tumbles into the dark lair of Shurale while chasing his prey. Batyr boldly throws himself to the aid of Suimbike, engaging in single-handed combat against Shurale and his evil suite. Defeating the evil spirit he carries the girl away to his home.

The bird-girl, won by the nobility and courage of her saviour, gives her heart to Batyr. In the meanwhile Shurale with his evil forest spirits perish in the forest lair which Batyr has set on fire. Suimbike throws her wings into the fire and remains forever on earth with her beloved.

MUSICAL FOLKLORE THEME

The composer Farid Yarullin embodied the poetic theme in his music with great emotional power. The musical themes of the main characters in the ballet are very expressive. Batyr is depicted as a strong-minded, courageous man His theme—broad and free, is built on the intonations of Tatar musical folklore. Suimbike's theme is gentle and lyrical. And, finally, the fierce Shurale and the evil spirits of the forest are drawn in a sharp grotesque manner.

The ballet "*Shurale*" as staged by L. Yakobson contains a large number of effective dramatic dances. Making extensive use of the rich store of the classic dance, the maître de ballet has enriched it with elements of the national dance. In this respect especially interesting are the character dances in scenes from a rural wedding in which the producer boldly introduces peculiar and original Tatar national rites, contests in strength and skill of young people, as well as dances of match-makers.

The maître de ballet showed great resourcefulness also in the production of the dances by Shurale himself and the evil spirits of the forest under his domination. The artist V. Levashov, who plays the part of Shurale, imparts to the image of the forest lord the traits of insidiousness and cunning. His dances are filled with pliability and twists, and are based on sharp and broken jumping movements.

The parts of the Flaming Witch and the Devil are well staged and are excellently executed by the artists Jadwiga Sangowich and N. Simachev. These dances are extraordinarily colourful and expressive.

YOUNG BALLERINA

The dances of the bird-girls and the gentle Suimbike bring a breath of the softness and warmth of the sun. Maya Plisetskaya, the prima ballerina of the ballet, has made great progress in recent years. With remarkable plasticity, suppleness, and expressive hands, she gives a superb depiction of the airiness of the bird-girl. The virtuosity of Plisetskaya's dancing with her big and smooth jumps and polished movements are in harmony with dramatic expressiveness and great emotionalism. The young ballerina shows in her dances stirring beauty, and all the fantasy and poetry of the Tatar national legend about the bewitched girl Suimbike.

Maya Plisetskaya's partner is one of the leading classical dancers of the Bolshoi Theatre—Yury Kondratov. Kondratov reveals in his dances, which are strict in design, the manliness and courage of the hero Batyr and his love for Suimbike. The pas de deux of Batyr and Suimbike are very pretty in their supports and design, and the dances of Batyr and the Tatar young men have been well staged by L. Yakobson.

The maître de ballet has created active dramatic dances depicting the struggle of man against the evil forest spirits, the fight for happiness, and for the assertion of truth and kindness over insidiousness and evil.

FOLK HUMOUR

The scenes of Batyr's and Suimbike's wedding are filled with subtle folk humour. Here Yakobson has found much that is striking and interesting in national folklore and has been able to embody it in a large suite of national dances.

A HIT WITH MOSCOW

The decor and costumes by the artist Milchin are worthy of great praise. The orchestra was excellently conducted by the young conductor Gaziz Dugashev, a Uigar by nationality. Gaziz Dugashev received a higher medical education, was a conductor of the Kazakh State Opera House in Alma Ata, the republic's capital, and then was invited to the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. At the present time he is conducting several operas and ballets.

The ballet "*Shurale*" has certainly made a hit with the Moscow theatregoer.

Mikhail Dolgopolov

BOOKS

Leap through the Curtain, by George Mikes (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 12s 6d.)

THE escape of Nora Kovach and Istan Rabovsky from behind the Iron Curtain in May 1953 caused a minor sensation in the ballet world. They were the two leading dancers of the Hungarian State Ballet at Budapest, Russian-trained by Gusev and Vaganova. The pair disappeared just before they were due to appear at a gala performance in the Russian zone of Berlin. Before long they were seen in Western Europe and America with Festival Ballet and on various tours. They were found to have what we now recognise as the virtues and failings of the Soviet dancer—great enjoyment, zest and technical ability allied to a style that savours of the sports stadium, and a bygone era. But there was no doubting their calibre as dancers, or their sincere and engaging qualities as persons, and now, after reading their story, one is also filled with admiration for their courageous and independent spirits.

In their youth, Kovach and Rabovsky—who are husband and wife—had both known privation and terror, for they had lived through the Nazi regime, war, invasion and Communist rule. Eventually, as their careers progressed, they became privileged persons, and as prima ballerina and premier danseur, were able to have their own flat, servants, and—almost unheard of luxury—their own car. They suffered no persecution and they had reached the top of their profession, but they longed to breathe the air of freedom, and though privileged themselves, there were too many that were underprivileged for them to have real peace of mind.

Their story is told in the first person, as it was related to the author, simply and naturally, with no attempt at heroics or sensationalism, and it is more exciting than any thriller. They have found happiness in the West, they say, and have no regrets. Before they lived in darkness, now they live in the light: that is their overwhelming feeling. One wishes them every success in their new life, for if the West has given them so much, they also have something to give the West.

Ten Dances in Labanotation, by Nadia Chilkovsky (Theodore Presser Company, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, $2.50).

TWO books on the theory and practice of Labanotation have been reviewed in these columns during the past year: now comes a book of dance studies, with piano accompaniment, based on this system. They are in contrasting moods, varying from a classical enchainement to a study entitled Circus Capers, and are designed for notation students of all ages who have mastered the basic symbols taught in elementary courses. Although they are intended for study on an intermediate level, some are suitable for sight-reading as well.

The piano accompaniments are simple studies, and by modern composers except for two pieces by J. S. Bach.

Revista Musical Chilena No. 46. (J. W. Chester, Ltd., London).

A review of Music in general, printed in Spanish, and with a more particular slant on music in South America. There is a small section on the Dance, chiefly concerned with some productions of ballet by Chile University.

Leap through the Curtain reviewed above is the story of the careers of Nora Kovach and Istvan Rabovsky. When they appeared with the Festival Ballet in London in 1953 they were interviewed by Alice Kaposi and an account of this interview was published in Ballet Today November issue 1953. Copies are still available from this office price 1/3d. post-paid.

DIARY

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

(Eve)	June	2nd	*Les Sylphides* *Madame Chrysanthème* *The Firebird*
„	„	3rd	*Checkmate* *Les Sylphides* *Tiresias*
(Mat)	„	4th	*Le Lac Des Cygnes (Act II)* *The Three Cornered Hat* *The Shadow*
(Eve)	„	6th	*Le Lac Des Cygnes, (Fonteyn, Somes)*
„	„	9th	*Les Sylphides* *The Lady and the Fool* *Tiresias*
(Mat)	„	11th	*Les Sylphides* *The Lady and the Fool* *Madame Chrysantheme*
(Eve)	„	11th	*Le Lac Des Cygnes, (Fonteyn, Somes)*
„	„	13th	*The Lady and the Fool* *The Three cornered Hat* *Job*
„	„	15th	*The Lady and the Fool* *The Three cornered Hat* *Job*
(Mat)	„	18th	*The Sleeping Beauty (Beriosova, Field)*
(Eve)	„	20th	*The Sleeping Beauty, (Grey, Field)*
„	„	24th	*The Sleeping Beauty (Elvin, Hart)*
(Mat)	„	25th	*The Sleeping Beauty (Beriosova, Field)*
(Eve)	„	25th	*The Three cornered Hat* *Madame Chrysanthème* *The Sleeping Beauty Act III*

Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at Sadler's Wells

	June	1st	*Selina* *House of Birds* *The Rake's Progress*
(Mat)	„	4th	*Danses Concertantes* *House of Birds* *Beauty and the Beast* *Les Rendezvous*
(Eve)	„	8th	*Les Patineurs* *Blood Wedding* *House of Birds*
(Mat)	„	11th	*Danses Concertantes* *Selina* *Beauty and the Beast* *Les Rendezvous*

Summer Tour 1955

Week commencing	13th June ..	*Odeon Cinema, Llandudno.*
„ „	20th June ..	*Winter Gardens, Morecambe.*
„ „	27th June ..	*Empire Theatre, Swansea.*
„ „	4th July ..	*Gaumont Theatre, Southampton.*
„ „	11th July ..	*Palace Theatre, Plymouth.*
„ „	18th July ..	„ „ „
„ „	25th July ..	*Essoldo Cinema, Brighton.*

Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells Theatre.
2 weeks commencing June 27th.

A NEW SERIES
FEATURING YOUNG
DANCERS IN THE NEWS

The Young

Most outstanding pupil at the end of her five year course 14 year old Roberta Spillane (right) won the Royal Academy Award of £50 to enable her to further her dancing education. Also as part of her prize she was introduced to Margot Fonteyn after watching a perfomance of the ballet *Sylvia* at Covent Garden.
Photo D. C. Davis.

(Excerpt from EN AVANT)

PRIDE of place in the New Zealand news over the past month goes to Miss Jill Powell. Fourteen-year old Miss Powell an Aucklander, has been announced as the winner of the 1954 Royal Academy of Dancing Scholarship. Awarded every two years it will permit Miss Powell to study at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School and she expects to leave for London some time near the end of this year. At present she is studying at the Nettleton-Edwards School of Ballet.

Other recipients of the R.A.D. Scholarship were Rowena Jackson (1941 now with Sadler's Wells), Alexander Grant (1944 now with Sadler's Wells), Yvonne Cartier (1946 now with Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet), Donald McAlpine (1948 now with Sadler's Wells) and Rosina Gay (1950 now with Borovansky). There was no award in 1952.

Above Roberta Spillane
Below Camille de Rhynal presents Awards

HILDE HOLGER gave a lecture demonstration in April at the Salle Erard. The title of the programme was "Approach to Creative work" and included Dance etudes, choreographic fragments and Dance compositions, demonstrated by children and advanced and professional students.

The audience, consisting mostly of teachers, dancers and dance teachers was greatly impressed by the artistic standard of the programme.

AT the end of the School Season a Gala Performance was held by Tamara Alexandrova's pupils at the Theatre du Casino Municipal, Nice. Pictured below is Camille de Rhynal presenting rewards to the winners. 1st prize, Christine Mayer, 2nd Christiane Laforest, 3rd Colette Oselin, 4th Monique Semeria.

Last month we published a photograph of Camille de Rhynal's ballet *La Rose Enchantee*. Choreographer for this ballet was Madame Carolus-Duran.

SCHOOLS and Clubs are invited to send in reports. These must be brief and, if possible, typewritten. Photographs will be published if space permits. Copy must be received not later than the 1st of the month preceding.

Dancer

PRESENTED by Madame Lydia Kyasht, Cirencester Ballet Club gave three performances of *Casse Noisette* pictured right are back row: Pat Brooks and Jane Falkner, Front Row left-to-right: Judy Franklin, Penelope Constable, Ann Hall and Angela Ginders.

PUPILS of Nesta Brooking's dancing school at Primrose Hill were joined by two professional dancers, Michael Holmes and Barry Irwin in the ballet *Calamity at Court* produced on Children's Television on April 28th. Choreography by Nesta Brooking, based on *King's Cross* a nursery rhyme by Eleanor Farjeon. Music by Helen Perkins. Below: (back row) Jill Noseworthy, Petronel Dunn, Margaret Holford and Gloria Bleumell (front row) Susan Salomon and Pauline Overton. Photo: Mike Davis.

Dear Editor . . . .

CANADA

ON TELEVISION

BEING a devoted reader of Ballet Today I appreciate very much the interest you take in the Canadian scene of Ballet. There is certainly an enormous development for the ballet in this country—particularly since this season in Television has given many opportunities to dancers and choreographers.

Heino Heiden arrived in Vancouver in 1952 and started immediately as Ballet Instructor at the British Columbia School of Dancing. Taking his company to Montreal in September 1953 Mr. Heiden produced the choreography for two thirty minute ballets for Television there. These, *Daphnis and Chloe* and *Pygmalion* proved so successful that the CBC took to regular classical ballets at least once a month. *Daphnis and Chloe* was danced by extremely young dancers (his pupils since he started teaching in Vancouver). Betty Pope was only sixteen when she danced Chloe for the first time.

On being invited to return Heiden decided to settle down and devote his talents to choreographing and dancing for Television. In 1954 our first work, prepared for the Canadian Ballet Festival in Toronto, was *Apollon Musagete* to Stravinsky's suite "Evocation to Apollo". This was followed by a ballet-comedy to Ibert's "Divertissement", inspired by the charming drawings of the French cartoonist Peynet, and called *Magician's Holiday*: Poulenc's *Les Biches* and *Matinée Musicale* to the Rossini-Britten "Menu à la Rossini". Beside these we did *Mephisto Waltz* by Liszt, featuring a corps de ballet to reflect and support the drama between the three central figures and *La Manège* inspired by the famous Vienna Imperial Horse-Shows, set to Mozart's 11th. Symphony. All these ballets were for an all-Canada distributed programme "The Concert Hour" which brings also full acts of operas, and famous instrumentalists and conductors. We recently had Igor Markewitch, Danilova, Krossavaska, and Gilpin as guests of this show.

In Canada Television is the most important and promising medium for a dancer to work in—and make a reasonable living. The distances between the large cities make a tour for a company very costly. However with the backing of Television we have been able to form and train a group of dancers, give them work to do and a chance to appear on stage. Outstanding guests have been asked to dance with us: as a regular soloist we have Rosemary Valaire, formally with Sadler's Wells and Lillian Lanese of the Ballet Theatre has also appeared frequently

At the moment Heino Heiden is preparing *Nobilissima Visione* (St. Francis) by Hindemith when guests from Ballet Theatre will appear in the two leads together with our regular soloists and dancers.

Peter Flinsch

Editorial note: Heino Heiden, born in Germany, was a child star in films, and appeared in Musicals and plays. He studied under Tatjana and Victor Gsovsky in Berlin and Munich and was a pupil of Preobrajenska in Paris. He was solo dancer at the Berlin State Opera, Premier Danseur and Ballet Master at the Dresden Opera, Premier Danseur at the Opera Comique Berlin and State Operetta Munich. He toured France with the Ballet of Janine Charrat and Germany with the Hamburg Ballet Theatre Company as a Ballet Master.

Peter Flinsch has collaborated with Heiden, designing several of his ballets and now belongs to the staff of CBC as a Scenic Artist.

THE HEINO HEIDEN BALLET

"Menu a la Rossini"
Ballet by Heino Heiden for CBC Television Montreal.

centre : Jury Gotshalks and Irene Apine of National Ballet of Canada.

back row : l. to r. Merle Stevens, Corinne St. Denis, Fernand Nault (Ballet Theatre) Marc Beaudet, Heino Heiden.

SYDNEY

It was only last month that I discovered your magazine and am very thrilled with it. It gives me just the sort of news and information that I like to read on ballet. Ballet is my main interest although I take no part in it except going to every performance I can. And now I can at last see my way clear to commence, in December, on a journey of 12½ thousand miles to see your wonderful ballet. I shall only have 3 months in London i.e. February, March and April, 1956 Will you write and tell me if I will see Sadler's Wells in London during those three months. As I am going on this trip to see as much ballet as possible, I want to be sure that I choose the right three months. Also is there a difficulty in booking seats for the ballet? I have heard all sorts of rumours from friends returning who were unable to see the ballet because they couldn't get in.

Sadler's Wells Ballet will be at the Royal Opera House London during January, February, March and probably most of April 1956. Book your seats as soon as you arrive in London.

Mrs. Joan Hall.

Discs — The widening field of Music for Ballet

THOSE of my readers who may be comparatively new to ballet, will have noticed what a wide, and ever widening field of music, ballet covers. There may be some who have enjoyed the music of a certain ballet and been surprised to find later that it was a symphony—music to which, ordinarily, they would not choose to listen.

Well there are some particularly fine symphonic works this month. Mendelssohn's Third was chosen by Balanchine for his *Scotch Symphony*, and by Frank Staff for *The Glen*. The performance conducted by Kletzki, Columbia 33CX1219, is the finest I have heard—he brings such life and sureness to the long stately crescendi as well as an inborn happiness.

Another fine recording is of Ansermet conducting Borodin's Second, Decca LXT 5022—the music of Massine's *Bogatyri*, in which he fills in all the subtle and more delicate shading. Personally I prefer Kletzki's bolder approach where the colouring is more vivid, Columbia 33CX-1167 but they are both so good that it is a question of personal choice.

Fokine's *Festin* was one of the ballets that was danced on that memorable opening night when Diaghilev's Ballets Russes first took Paris by storm. It also drew from the symphonies—the finale was from Tchaikovsky's Second, which Beecham with the R.P.O., conducts to perfection and gets a very good recording on Philips ABL 3015. Aptly known as the *Little Russian* for the traditional tunes woven into the score, it is no wit less interesting than many of Tchaikovsky's more frequently played works.

Both records of *La Péri* are excellent—certainly neither will disappoint but I have a slight preference for Ansermet's performance on Decca LXT 5003. It is very slight, so that couplings become important. Fistoulari on Parlophone PMC 1011, conducts d'Indy's Prelude to Act I of Fervaal and also his Istar, choreographed by Lifar for the Paris Opera Ballet. While the Decca coupling is Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead*.

The music of Slavenska's *Concerto Romantico* is from Listz's *First Piano Concerto*, of which Wilhelm Kempff, with L.S.O. under Fistoulari, Decca LXT 5025, gives the best performance I have heard so far. His recent competitor is Samson François on Columbia 33CX1238 but I did not find the Frenchman too pleasing. Although his fingers move with amazing rapidity, there is a heaviness, a feeling that insufficient thought has been given to the work. The coupling is Chopin's *Concerto No.* 1—Nijinska's *Chopin Concerto*—but to me, it lacks a sympathetic touch and understanding.

As Arthur Grumiaux and the Vienna P.O. play them, Mozart's two *Violin Concertos K*216 and *K*218 on Philips ABL 3040, are not so very far short of being perfect and the tone of his violin is particularly fine. We heard the former concerto, with its slow movement of great beauty, when Ballet Theatre came to Covent Garden—John Taras' first ballet, *Graziana* with Kay, Alonso and Eglevsky.

Bach provides the music for the serenely beautiful and the horrific. Walton's arrangement of his Cantatas and other pieces for Ashton's *Wise Virgins*—very satisfactorily rendered by the LPO under Boult, Decca LXT 5028—is at times almost the acme of serenity. Even so Petit chose his *Great Passacaglia in C minor*—finely played by the organist, Gaston Litaize, on London DTL 93037—as the background music for *Le Jeune Homme et la Morte*. In a general sense, music of such similarity could scarcely have been put to such contrasting uses.

The middle course is found in the use of his *Orchestral Suites* by Fokine for *Les Elements* and Lifar's work for *Les Jeunesses Musicales de France*. Fokine choreographed the Second and Lifar the Third, which is, I think, the more attractive quite apart from the *Air on the G String*. To hear it in its proper setting, reveals its full beauty as in Columbia's complete recording of *Suites* 1-4, 33CX1239-40. Otto Klemperer's treatment of the Second, is unfortunately a little uninteresting but the Third is delightful.

B.C.

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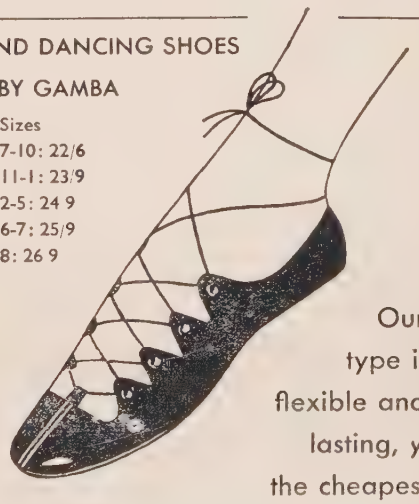

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APPROACH

ONE of Nadine Nicolaeva-Legat's great assets is a power of vivid, descriptive explanation. Take, for instance, the term "Ballon".

"The word *ballon*" says Madame Legat, "means 'Ball'—that is to say, it suggests the idea of a ball that bounces many times without being started by a fresh impetus". That is the idea the dancer must have in mind and try to imitate. But how ? The teacher must first of all know which muscles are involved in the action of springing.

1. Psoas muscles, which are on the inner side of the vertebrae (spinal column) and which at the top, are attached to the vertebrae, and at the lower end are attached to the femur. They lift the thigh, and also help to bend the thigh on the pelvis. The initial movement for a spring is a bend.

2. The hamstring muscles, which are under the quadriceps. These should be contracted.

3. The quadriceps: these must relax as the hamstrings contract.

"The whole secret of the *ballon* lies in what is called controlled relaxation, that is, a certain amount of contraction must remain, which acts on the nerves and passes on to the muscles", says Madame Legat. A degree of mental effort is required to obtain the desired result; therefore the dancer must know *what* she is doing, and why.

We now come to the lower set of muscles.

4. The calf (gastrocnemius) muscle must be semi-relaxed in preparation for a spring with the knee bent.

5. The buttock muscles (glutea) must be contracted during the lift. The quadriceps, relaxed in preparation, must now contract in order to straighten and pull the knee in. In this lift, the calf muscles must contract because they raise the heel from the ground.

The photographs on these pa[illegible]

Eight-year old Louise Papillon

TO BALLET

: No. 4. A series based on interviews with N. Nicolaeva-Legat and written by Elisabeth H. C. Corathiel

Then the muscles at the front of the leg (tibia) must be tightened in order to pull up the middle of the instep.

6. Finally, the small muscles at the sole of the foot must be contracted so that the foot forms an arch with the toe pointing to the ground.

In ordinary walking, Madame Legat explains, the peroneus muscles control the instep; this also happens when rising on tiptoe. But something more is demanded from a dancer who must be able to raise the body from the ground to fairly high levels. This requires more strength and power, and the use of two additional muscles which run, like two cords, on either side of the tibia. They are called the peroneus-tibial muscles. We find these muscles naturally well-developed in the ape-species but in man they are normally small and look like loose ligaments with very small muscles at the ends. Dancers who make a point of developing these muscles by good training can achieve superior *elevation*.

"The essence of *ballon*", this brilliant Russian teacher explains, "is the well-regulated but not complete relaxation of the 'antagonist' muscles, in order to retain sufficient power for the next spring without fresh impetus. This control must be continued throughout the whole dance so as to give an impression of irrepressible feathery lightness."

Now we come to *elevation*. This means jumping high in the air, with the supreme object of remaining momentarily suspended. Madame Legat is convinced that eventually the human body will achieve such power that more sensational feats will be possible than have hitherto been known.

Meanwhile . . . . there are two aspects to *elevation*: the vertical spring with a stop at the summit of the spring; and suspension in air while jumping horizontally.

"There are two stages to the vertical jump", says Madame Legat. "The first is to push from the ground (and as I already explained in our first interview, this technique of pushing improves rapidly with practice). The second is that of making an additional inner contraction when suspended in the air at the apex of the jump. This is entirely a matter of will-power, since no further push may be made from the ground. The moment of contraction and of inner push must be calculated and prompted by instinct, but the correct moment is at the apex of the jump in order to give the extra impetus to the suspension.

"In a horizontal jump (except in a few cases such as the *soubresaut*, etc.) the spring is produced as follows: One leg is kicked high in front of the face, and the other pushes from the ground. The push must be very strong in order to make a long jump, and a splitting movement must be produced in the air at the apex of the spring, the height of which will depend on the height of the forward kick. This splitting movement must also be controlled mentally to give the final touch by simultaneous pulling up of chest, stomach and buttocks as well as the lumbar muscles (pectoral, abdominal, gluteal) and it is this that gives the impression of suspension in air."

She explains that there are two different directions from which the horizontal jump may be taken.

1. Sideways, with both legs extended in line with both shoulders, and facing the audience. This is usually known as "side split".

2. Diagonal, in which case one leg will be forward and the other back, and the position may be in *arabesque* or *attitude*.

"*Feathery lightness*", Madame Legat emphasises, 'is really linked with the quality of a school, and in particular it is an attribute of the Russian method. The principle means of achieving it is the coupé. The Russian method teaches the dancer to cut himself—or herself—from the ground by pushing the ground away from the feet. This is quite distinct from other systems, especially the Italian, where the feet and legs *take off* from the ground. Therein lies the difference between the two schools—the push of the feet, or the pushing the floor away by the feet, affects the whole conduct of the body. It lies not only in the movement itself, but in the rhythm. The Italian system develops a kind of *terre a terre* dancing, especially where female dancers are concerned. Nearly all variations for female dancers imported to Russia by Italian performers were low to the ground, most of them just a multitude of pirouettes, rotating movements (chainé, pas de bourré) attitudes, arabesques on toes, and so on. The jumping steps are also *terre a terre*, *pas de chat* or *pas de basques*, small jumps, ineffective, as the legs take them low.

"So I would recommend all who want to develop feather-like dancing to push strongly from the ground with the feeling that by means of this push the floor is pushed away from the feet. After such a push the whole leg should be immediately straightened—*i.e.*, the feet with toes pointed, the knees with a feeling of drawing in as hard as possible, so that the line of the knee is quite straight and not projecting; the calves and thighs with the hamstring muscles fully contracted. The whole aspect of the body concentrated on rising".

shew pupils of Madame Legat's School
Kathreen Beetham and Colin Jones

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JOURNALIST

Jean Coquelle takes us ROUND THE STUDIOS

No. 1 Elvira Rone in Paris

Elvira Rone gives a lesson at the Studio Wacker in Paris. On the extre e right is Lyana Glorova who did so well during the 1953/4 *season in* La Scene Francaise, Congres des Espoirs *etc.*

THERE can be no doubt that the teaching genius of Olga Preobrajenska derives from having found the perfect balance between technique and artistic sensibility. Her style, fragile as a budding flower, is based upon a perfect knowledge of the resources of the Dance. That means that the perpetuation of this precious style was a delicate matter, for which most performers—not even the greatest of stars—could be depended upon. A special gift was needed—the gift of knowing what cannot be explained. Elvira Rone had this gift, and it seems that it was for that reason that destiny pushed her, throughout her career as a dancer, to become a teacher.

In 1919, when she left Preobrajenska's school at St. Petersburg, her diploma carried—over and above an honourable mention—these words written by the famous teacher—"her knowledge of the Dance is such that she would make a Professor." And, in fact, all the way through her career Elvira Rone was called upon to give lessons. Her tours often carried her away from Paris, where Mme Preobrajenska gave lessons in a studio above the Olympia Cinema, but when she returned she resumed her lessons, and her marvellous understanding of style allowed her to acquire, more and more, the subtleties of that combination of the methods of Cechetti and the Russian school, polished and perfected by the personal touch of the great artiste.

In 1927 working in this studio, Elvira Rone met a little girl who already showed much promise and whose name—unknown then—was Tamara Toumanova. At that period, 'fouettes' were not universally practiced; only a few stars made use of them, and Mme Preobrajenska did not teach this technique to her pupils. However, she allowed Elvira Rone to practice them in her studio after hours.

Seeing this, the young Tamara wanted to learn them and asked Elvira to teach her—but the Professor was against this, thinking rightly that it was too soon for this child to know the secret. So she decided to dispense with permission and learned from Elvira in secret. When she knew them well enough, dancer and pupil presented the result of their labours to Mme Perobrajenska, who allowed them to continue.

So it came about that when, in 1929, Mme Frank, the ballet mistress at the Opera, saw Tamara Toumanova, she engaged her at once for her 'fouettes'; she needed a young pupil who knew the technique to dance 'L'eventail de Jeanne'—and young Tamara often said to Elvira Rone "*your* 'fouettes' were a success last night".

For the last 20 years, Elvira Rone became the official assistant of the famous teacher, and often indeed replaced her—during her annual holidays and in her absences, which often lasted 6 months or more (as on the eve of the second world war). Most of Preobrajenska's pupils had the pleasure of working with her, and in the class there were to be seen, Tamara Toumanova, Tatiana Stepanova, Mia Slavenska, Marjorie Tallchief, Boris Kniaseff, Georges Skibine, Alexandre Kalioujny, Vladimir Skouratoff, Vladimir Dokoudovsky, to quote only a few of the best-known. Among those who most appreciated her lessons was Boris Kniaseff who also left his classes in her charge during his absences. Nina Vyroubova followed her advice and worked with her before joining the Opera. "You put me *on the right road*"—she wrote later.

Elvira Rone's teaching combines powerful technique with a great poetry of gesture. Back and legs are well placed, arms harmonious and feet splendid. She teaches perfect turns, is careful about the 'batterie', and knows everything there is to know about the Dance—from its basic instruction to the smallest trick to prolong a balance.

Elvira Rone is in every way worthy of the genial professor who made her — Olga Preobrajenska.

DANCER Roma Heritage

Compares Teaching Methods in England and France

ARRIVING in Paris last Spring, and walking up the Rue Douai to Salle Wacker Studios, I was a little inclined to romanticise this, my first visit, to the ballet studios in France. To other dancers whose financial situation is no deterrent, Paris and the classes will be taken as a matter of course. I had to wait a long time for this experience, and because this was the realisation of a long cherished ambition, I remember standing by the window of Madame Preobrajenska's studio and thinking how satisfying it was to be there and to find it in no way disappointing.

Now I am in Paris for the second time. My capacity for enjoyment of this wonderful city is still unimpaired, but I feel more able to give a balanced opinion and to assess the difference of approach in the studios of Paris and London. There is a very marked difference in the emotional quality of working here. There is an excitement for the visiting dancer, more competition, more individuality, one is treated as an adult, each one works for himself. One notices the frequent conversation, and that there is less discipline.

I am quite sure that one can get as good a basic training in London, possibly more thorough. Certainly a better explanation of mechanics would be given by Errol Addison, Miss Anna Northcote—placing, line and quality from Madame Nordi or Miss Kathleen Crofton. Yet an odd thought strikes me. Little old Madame Preobrajenska, no longer able to demonstrate so well, seemingly indifferent to mechanics, stressing what seems to me as old-fashioned trivialities, has students who dance brilliantly. Their lines clearly defined yet relaxed, with a fluid easy grace. Is it telepathy, can a noble concept held for so long impress itself subtly on the mind of the student ?

Watching a well-known teacher I was horrified to see the bad posture, the rolling ankles, of the children. I was assured that his older students were excellent, so perhaps he too works by telepathy !

Whatever their secret, the knowledge they pass on to their students is backed up by hard and unremitting work. This also applies to the Ballet Companies. Rehearsals for the re-formed Janine Charrat Company often commence at 8 p.m. and go on until midnight. At 11.45 p.m. the other evening I watched one of the soloists working full out, and every turn was perfect.

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